

SPRIT OF THE PRESS.

Editorial Opinions of the Leading Journals upon Current Topics—Compiled Every Day for the Evening Telegraph.

THE PHILADELPHIA FESTIVAL.

From the N. Y. Times.

Some eighty odd years ago, when a few hundred officers of the Continental Army of the Revolution, at the close of the war, organized a social reunion, with a mild distinctive badge and the slightest possible suspicion of "inheritation," the sensibilities of party, if not of the people, were aroused, and the thing was regarded as dangerous.

And then we are told that "no one talked with better brevity than ex-Secretary Borie in his tribute to Captain Williams of the Ononda"—explaining, we trust, why the department had not given him boats enough to save his drowning crew; and, finally, it concludes with a description of post-prandial agony which only a Philadelphia orator is capable of inflicting.

And the curtain fell on what might, under proper direction, have been a scene of kind and genial fellowship, but which, prostituted by politics, was a hollow and a dismal pageant. The canals on the Rappahannock or in the Wilderness created a purer glow in the hearts of those who clustered round them in the moment of danger than did the garish footlights of the Academy or the empty champagne bottles of the Continental in the hour of triumph.

It must have been a curious sight, this gathering in the Philadelphia Academy of Music; that crowded building whence, but a week before, Revels had been excluded, and across whose polluted threshold—so says a radical newspaper now before us—"no decent man ought ever again to put his foot."

But then, besides a speech, of which we have once spoken, there was a poem and a poet. The latter is thus described by the Tribune:—"Baker, the war poet—the handsome Baker, as they call him in Philadelphia, and picture to themselves a kind of Dutch Byron, too drowsy to be grand and too well-behaved to be wicked—a lyric poet, whose noblest and boldest fire only smoulders amid such an oratorical verbiage as he reads."

This, according to the canon of the Tribune, may be very fine, but it won't bear iteration. When Major Pennicott, an old soldier, was invited to Lady Clavering's second day's dinner he was very thoughtful, though he went. So the soldiers of the Potomac had to swallow Mr. Baker's cold meat, or hash, or be content. Such verses as we have quoted are not very palatable when hot; but when stale, not to speak irreverently of a Boston staple, they are as insipid as cold chowder.

AT LAST.

Senator Revels Delivers His Lecture—Horticultural Hall Crowded to Excess—An Able Effort.

Despite the opposition of the Board of Directors of the Academy of Music, Senator Revels, of Mississippi, has been allowed to deliver a lecture in our city. Horticultural Hall last night presented an audience and a scene that would have gladdened the heart of the most eloquent Caucasian.

I have always borne to the land of Penn a peculiar affection. The good old Quaker stock of its citizens always excited my admiration. They have always been the champions of equal rights. In the days gone by the black men always knew who their friends were.

When requested to address the citizens of Philadelphia, in casting about me for a theme on which to say a few words to-night, I was bewildered by the multiplicity of subjects presented to my notice. My own people were pressing their claims upon me, and not only them, but the cause of freedom throughout the world.

Here the speaker gave at some length a description of what he saw in the various departments of the United States. He pointed out the most interesting point to me, the visit to the Patent Office. Amid a multiplicity of other matters I noticed the old printing press of Benjamin Franklin, the "Boston Printer and the Philadelphia Philosopher."

I propose, therefore, my friends, to follow here to-night a train of thought which the old printing press of Franklin and the words of Elliott suggest to my mind. It seems almost miraculous that the three greatest inventions should have been made during the same epoch, and that that epoch immediately preceded the discovery of the New World—the application of gunpowder to the uses of war, the steam engine, and the invention of movable types, for the purposes of printing, by Faust, and Schaeffer, and Gutenberg.

Our customs duties embrace a very large number of articles, while, as we have said, in England very few are touched. In gross expenditure, England is not so favorably situated as we are. The interest on her national debt amounts to three and a third per cent. on her gross income; the maintenance of her army and navy entails a charge of another three and a third per cent.; the internal administration costs two per cent.; the local taxation amounts to nearly three per cent.—altogether, about eleven and a half per cent. of the gross income of the nation.

With regard to the income tax, the exemptions here are much greater than they are in England, but still it cannot be doubted that at the rate of five per cent. the tax ought to bring more into the Treasury than it does.

Another point worth noticing is that the taxes in England are so levied as to draw considerably more money from the rich than the poor. It has been calculated by Mr. H. Dudley Baxter, an excellent statistician, that what are called the "upper and middle classes" in England contribute £54,000,000 to the national income, and the "manual labor class" £29,112,000. Professor Levi, another recognized authority, estimates that the percentage of taxes to income in the case of the working classes is five and a half per cent., while the upper and middle classes pay twelve and a half. The aim of English financiers is undoubtedly that which has been well defined by Mr. Bright—"The taxes which now exist ought to be put on a satisfactory and honest footing, so that every man, and every description of property, may be called upon in its just proportion to support the burdens and necessities of the State."

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The gross revenue of the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1869 was \$17,220,511, or nearly twenty-eight per cent. of the capital and debts of the Company at the end of that year. Since 1867 the dividends to the stockholders have averaged nearly eleven and one-half per cent. per annum after paying interest on its bonds and passing annually a large amount to the credit of construction account.

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